



The Invisibles

A Full English translation is available.

棄形記

Original Author: Toe Yuen Kin-To **Comic Artist:** Shin Yan **Publisher:** Dyna Books

Date: 10/2021 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

188 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 2 (Two-Book series)

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On what should be a simple date, Maimo, a mild-mannered kindergarten teacher, is ridiculed for her appearance. Embarrassed, she soon after accepts an offer for cosmetic surgery that promises transformation—but goes horribly wrong. In moments of extreme embarrassment and pain, she literally becomes invisible. Maimo embarks on an unconventional revenge plan, taking on a corrupt cosmetic clinic and exposing its scams.

Blending humor, imagination, and sharp social critique, *The Invisibles* turns invisibility into a meditation on shame, agency, the beauty industry, and the experience of women. Through repeated cycles of disappearance and reappearance, she confronts the ethical and intimate meanings of being unseen.



Original Author **Toe Yuen Kin-To**

A Hong Kong native, Toe Yuen Kin-To has worked across television, film, stunts, and comics, all the while nurturing a dream of writing a novel. He eventually became an animation director, and his debut feature, *My Life as McDull*, won the Golden Horse Award and the Cristal for a Feature Film at the Festival International du Film d'Animation d'Annecy.



Comic Artist **Shin Yan**

Based in Taipei and formerly in California, Shin Yan has worked in animation, games, and comics. Known for a versatile, seemingly boundless style, the author delights in absurd stories, ghost tales, storytelling, crowds, food, alternate worlds, and the joyful creation of chaos. Shin Yan's works include *Nine Lives: Hangry Girls Club*, *Tumulus*, *The Invisibles*, and *When Sun Rises in The Starlit Vale*. In 2021, Shin Yan was nominated for the 12th Golden Comic Awards for *The Invisibles*.

Fresh and Suspenseful, This Comic Book Uses Invisibility to Explore Shame, Freedom, and the Female Experience

by Wen-Chien Hsu

In popular culture, “invisibility” is both dangerous and seductive. *Hollow Man* (2000) opens like a classic mad scientist parable: researcher Sebastian Caine develops a serum that renders the human body invisible and becomes his own test subject. As the serum takes effect and his veins gradually vanish, the audience witnesses not only a technological miracle but the onset of a moral collapse. At first, he behaves like a child at play, indulging in seemingly harmless acts of spying on colleagues and neighbors. But once he realizes that “no one can see him,” restraint evaporates: desire and violence surge unchecked, leading him to assault, kill, and ultimately endanger his entire research team.

Twenty years later, *The Invisible Man* (2020) shifts perspective. Cecilia, controlled and humiliated by her wealthy boyfriend Adrian, escapes from his high-security mansion. Believing him to be dead, she soon experiences a series of inexplicable disturbances—unexplained sounds, moving objects, and devices that activate on their own—revealing that Adrian, aided by an optical invisibility suit, continues to stalk and manipulate her. Both films expose the same pattern: men remain unseen while exerting power over women.

The Invisibles, however, overturns this familiar narrative. Its protagonist is neither a genius scientist nor a victim in a horror thriller, but an ordinary woman

routinely diminished through everyday social interactions. On what should be a simple date, she is criticized for her appearance and subjected to subtle ridicule. Struggling with shame and self-doubt, she accepts an invitation for cosmetic surgery that promises transformation but proves to be a trap. When the procedure goes wrong, her body does not improve; instead, in moments of extreme embarrassment, shame, or pain, she quite literally becomes invisible.

This premise, though seemingly absurd, is sharply critical. Her invisibility is not a technological marvel but a product of social violence. The constant pressures of being watched, judged, and expected to be “beautiful” culminate in a single thought: *I’d rather not be seen at all*. At home, she experiments with controlling this power—tracking emotional shifts, testing breathing rhythms, and seeking a way to vanish and reappear at will. The first time she deliberately turns invisible, she cannot return, forcing her to layer clothes and step outside. Passersby stare, and a police officer stops her. When he orders her to lift her clothing for inspection, fear triggers her body’s sudden reappearance—but his gaze lands on her chest, underscoring that women remain objects of scrutiny whether visible or not.

In *The Invisibles*, invisibility becomes a meditation on shame, agency, and the female experience. Maimo acquires the unprecedented power to decide whether she appears in the eyes of others, yet this choice carries a heavy burden: she must continually negotiate the line between visibility and concealment. The power protects her even as it confines her. Through repeated cycles of disappearance and reappearance, she is forced to confront the ethical and intimate meanings of being unseen.

If invisibility in *Hollow Man* embodies male arrogance and indulgence, and in *The Invisible Man* the ghost of domestic abuse, then in *The Invisibles*, it signifies a woman coming to terms with her own body. The story transforms the traditional “invisible man” narrative into a feminist allegory: in a world that constantly demands women’s beauty, true invisibility is not an escape, but a refusal to be defined by others.

Wen-Chien Hsu possesses a free-spirited soul. She has worked at LGBTQ+ organizations, the 113 Domestic Violence Hotline, and works as an editor of Books from Taiwan 2.0. She is dedicated to bringing Taiwanese comics and picture books to a global audience.





